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STATE FOR WHA/CEN, WHA/PPC, WHA/USOAS, AND DRL/PHD  
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SUBJECT: HONDURAN ELECTIONS NEWS: UPDATE 15

REF: Tegucigalpa 2337 and previous

TSE Announces New Mechanism to Combat Electoral Fraud

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[1](#)1. Carlos Romero, the Director of Elections at the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), announced a new procedural mechanism to combat electoral fraud. Once voting is finished, election judges will count all valid marks on each ballot. The head official at each election table will have to note the total number of valid marks made on the reverse of the ballot. This check is particularly necessary in the case of congressional and municipal. For example, the Department of Francisco Morazan has 23 seats in Congress; each is elected at-large. Accordingly, voters can select up to 23 congressional candidates from among a total of 115 choices (each of the five political parties has twenty-three candidates). However, only 23 marks will be allowed on the Francisco Morazan congressional ballot. More than 23 marks will immediately disqualify the entire ballot. Ballots containing 23 or fewer marks will be valid. It is believed that the integrity of the electoral process will be enhanced by forcing election judges to record the total number of marks on the reverse of the ballot to prevent anyone from adding marks to the ballot, as allegedly occurred in some instances in the February primary elections. Additionally, this figure must also be recorded in the electoral minutes taken by the electoral table Secretary. Of course, this system assumes the integrity of the election judges.

[1](#)2. Nearly 15,000 Election Handbooks will be handed out to each party before election day to instruct electoral table officials on regulations pertaining to electoral table and other matters related to the general election on November 27. On election day, there will be nearly 14,000 electoral tables countrywide that should be staffed by a representative of each of the five political parties. Every table will select a member to serve as president and another member to serve as secretary. Since the smaller political parties do not have

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sufficient national coverage, many tables will not have representatives from the smaller parties.

TSE Sends Mobile Units to Educate Voters

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[1](#)3. The TSE has dispatched mobile training units to different cities in the country to educate citizens on the electoral process in preparation for the November 27 general election. Some of the information made available by the mobile teams includes the location of voting centers, acceptable ways of marking the ballot, etc. This voter education effort will continue until election day and is financially supported by the Organization of American States (OAS). USAID has funded a larger voter education effort through the umbrella NGO FOPRIDEH.

Indelible Voting Ink Arrives

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[1](#)4. The TSE received 15 thousand markers, which will be used to stain a finger of each citizen who casts his/her vote on Election Day. The markers were purchased from a Mexican company thanks to a donation from the Government of Japan. The ink used is different than that used during the primary election. The total cost for the election markers was 1.5 million lempiras (USD 79,500). It is estimated that each pen has 400 applications. When marked, the ink lasts from three to five days. PolChief tested the ink and confirmed the durability.

TSE to Permit Vote on Candidate's Photograph

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[1](#)5. The TSE has determined that a mark on a given candidate's photograph, in lieu of the box below the photo, will be

considered valid. During the primary elections February 20, this type of mark was prohibited and disqualified the entire ballot. TSE President Aristides Mejia stated that it is important that the will of the voter be taken into account. The decision to accept ballots where the voters have marked the photograph was unanimously supported by the TSE magistrates. This decision by the TSE pertains to all three election ballots: presidential, congressional, and municipal.

#### PINU Presents Government Plan

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16. Dr. Carlos Alejandro Sosa Coello, presidential candidate of the Innovation and Unity Party (PINU), presented his government plan during a ceremony at a local hotel in Tegucigalpa on November 1. The plan, which is part campaign platform and part roadmap for post-election action, is organized into four major sections: health, education, employment, and security. The plan calls for the sustainable exploitation of natural resources and the development of renewable energy, supports vocational education, and evidences a strong determination to combat drug trafficking.

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